

Special Education Monitoring Self-Assessment (SEMSA)

Survey Questions/Comments

Question 28: In what ways did your district/agency benefit from the SEMSA

This helped to highlight areas that we needed to address in our district.

It pinpointed areas of weakness in both the overall program/procedures and in individual case managers.

Some details in the process were learned.

It didn't.

We've developed a process for continual monitoring related to compliance issues. We've developed specific improvement plans regarding evaluations and IEP development.

We clearly identified process areas of strength and areas of weakness. We were able to make corrections in those areas and understood the need for those corrections.

Thorough knowledge of special education processes were learned by a new special education staff. The standards checklists were extremely helpful in knowing state expectations and compliance rules. The process helped to unify our staff into their forms and processes used.

I was a first year director at the time and it helped me to know where our district was and wasn't in compliance.

It made the special education staff more aware of compliance issues. It also took the stress away from the actual MSIP year because we had completed the self-monitoring the semester before and did not have an on-site.

Pointed out specific areas of strengths and concerns

Increased awareness of compliance requirements

It did bring to light that the SEAS program was not all it tried to say it was. It showed the deficiencies in that program.

It was very helpful to see what compliance issues we still needed to address (with the reg. changes) and training that needed to be provided. I think it was a great growth process for us to monitor ourselves and to validate what we were doing correctly and to see where the concerns were.

1. Clarification on various processes and standards.
2. The SEMSA Process also provides for an opportunity for staff/districts to be positively reinforced in those areas where you
are in compliance and to provide technical assistance from DESE in

My entire department participated which allowed us all to be on the same page regarding regulations. It raised awareness as to how important being compliant was.

Clarified the process.

Understanding of how to make the computer generated IEP management system in compliance

Staff members became very familiar with the standards and indicators (Document B) and were able to identify compliance mistakes in each file.

We became much more aware of the entire process and what it really takes to be in compliance on a daily basis.

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made us more aware of special ed compliance

Detailed inspection impressed every step of the evaluation and maintenance process. Involvement of all special education teachers reinforced compliance training.

SEMSA process helps us fine-tune our process and keeps us up to date with the procedures and regulations.

Special education staff became more familiar with special education process and procedures. Review of files helped special education staff become more attentive to quality of IEPs.

Looked at student performance in state assessments and participation in program.

It was effective in helping us keep current on compliance issues.

It helps stay in compliance.

I feel that the SEMSA made the special educators in my district a little more aware of their need to closely follow the standards and their need to utilize the standards regularly.

We have special education staff in four attendance centers. It was a good opportunity for them to work together and to see how staff in other buildings address issues. It was an excellent refresher for procedural requirements.

Trained teachers to thoroughly examine a student's file and understand the process forms.

Self-monitoring reinforced the District's responsibility for detailed procedures/documentation required for compliance.

Areas of non-compliance were identified and compliance procedures are being implemented.

We became much more knowledgeable of rules that had changed and paperwork that we needed to change.

DESE's training and the training we provide to the teachers is very valuable.

DESE's training and the training we provide to the teachers is very valuable.

The on-site review process was very informative and beneficial to the special education staff. The reviewer was very knowledgeable about the special education process and helped us to correct the imperfections in our system.

Assessment of compliance

The special education staff worked together as a team to review the files. Overall it was a good learning tool for understanding compliance issues and what is required.

New teachers became more aware of the Compliance documents used throughout the special education process.

It allowed us to find any area not in compliance and to make the staff aware of the deficiencies.

We reviewed and revised several forms

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Brought about greater understanding of the state's interpretation of the standards. It then allowed us to polish the areas in question.

We would have had to do the work anyway to get ready for the old on site visit so at least nothing was wasted. I still think the old on site visit is still the best way.

It has made us more aware of any items lacking in the special education process.

It helps us look at the Special Education process as well as what documentation we were using to show that the district was following the process.

Became a little more aware of the whole process of special education.

We spent a great deal of time reviewing files. We learned to identify mistakes and shared them with all Special Education teachers.

More aware of Compliance issues

We were able to organize and pinpoint areas that need improvement.

This process helped our special education staff better understand the details of the special education process and helped to identify the areas where we were out of compliance.

I was not in charge of Special Education last year but I did participate in the review. I hope to have everything in compliance for our next review.

Amanda Burch

The documents listed every point of compliance. This was helpful in reviewing files.

The process helped our district to focus on the various areas of the special educational process and to determine strengths and weaknesses of our programs. Improve the weaknesses and continue the strengths.

Became aware of areas of non compliance.

Updated our early childhood special education practice

By aligning our process with the state's compliance standard.

The Special Ed. Dept. is more knowledgeable in meeting the needs of the students. The District benefited from the on-site review. Many questions were answered. Mrs. Meyers took time to explain procedures to specific teachers and administrators. Overall

The review provided an opportunity to review our files and actually evaluate how we were according to compliance standards.

It also allowed time to discuss and have question/answer time with staff.

Knowing exactly what was in compliance and what was not.

none

The process helped the district to be more aware of the paper work and time consuming tasks that require many extra hours beyond contract time for special education teachers. New spec. ed staff learned more about the whole spec. ed. process.

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Helped new SPED teachers understand the process and compliance procedures. Interpret and understand data collection for MAP

We have a better understanding of compliance and process.

Provided staff with moments of discovery of what should or should not be done to effect compliance.

The district went through the processes to understand the compliance documentation.

Reassurance that we try very hard to do all processes accurately and correctly by the standards.

Another review of compliance issues and another review of district data. We have monthly staff mtg where this information is shared.

The teacher's became more aware of the importance of following the special education process.

Raised awareness of compliance issues.

It helped us to realize in what areas we need to improve.

Since it only involved special ed staff and not any regular administrators it was just an additional burden of paperwork with no relief from central office. The demands of SEMSA could easily be done once if an on-site was required.

Yes we did benefit. The areas that we need to work on were revealed.

It helps to take a good cross section look at your files every few years like that and to take at least one file from each teacher to make sure you know how each teacher is performing with her documentation. It helps to evaluate your process in detail.

Made me aware of what you are looking for and what I need to do to stay in compliance.

It served as a check of district understanding of compliance and assessment of how well we managing compliance paperwork.

Targeted areas of weakness in the special education process and administration process.

Helped to ensure all staff were aware of all compliance bullets". Helped staff understand why administration was having them do things a certain way. Comparing district stats to state stats gave us hope as we saw that we were doing pretty good"

It truly helped our district know what we needed to improve upon! The initial training was outstanding. We were able to follow up with that with each teacher in the district. I enjoyed the let's learn from this" experience."

Increased focus on student preformance. Monitoring self-assessment was completed by key staff. Results were shared and future actions were initiated with all special education staff.

It has made us more aware of any items lacking in the special education process.

Better understanding of compliance issues.

We were able to organize and pinpoint areas that need improvement.

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Since district's are being required to bring ALL students up to proficient" or "advanced" levels (based upon Missouri's AYP criteria) it is critical to monitor student performance. (Although a student could accomplish all IEP goals/objective with 100%"

Districts could receive checklist forms and criteria each year to make sure they are staying in compliance in the years they are not going through SEMSA.

The process was incredibly time consuming. The compliance problems we had were obvious to me withing the first few files I checked. I felt I could have checked fewer files and had the same information.

Process for completing the District Profile was very extensive

Percentages obtained from small districts have no meaning and should not be even considered. Example: We graduated three special education students a few years ago. Two were working 6 months after graduation. One stayed home with her child and step children. What does 66% tell anyone?

It took so long to get the report back and then it was grossly in error that has meant nothing to my staff...the only good thing that it accomplished was that I had a larger file sample to review as an administrator. I do file sample reviews every year any way.

The process should be used to stimulate professional development activities within the district based on the results. We used it for that purpose and felt that it had a positive impact. The corrections that needed to be done were put into place immediately.

The SEMSA workshop was very helpful. Perhaps having districts participate in those workshops earlier or more frequently would help disticts stay abreast of procedural changes and/or improvements in specific forms that would maintain compliance.

More timely response from DESE once reports are submitted. Keep the self-study portion for districts.

I'm not sure because we were one of the first districts to go through and it is my understanding the process has been changed some already from that first round.

Very complicated...make it less so troubling.

Quicker feedback.

It was outrageous the amount of time that was wasted waiting for our final report. It took over 9 months to find out that we just had a few minor things to fix. There was a lot of stress and worry that could have been avoided.

Make it less time consuming- maybe fewer files in each area. Not sure, tallying and reporting took forever.

I have no suggestions for improvment if the in-service training and the techinical assistance currently provided by DESE continues. I beleive these are invaluable assistance made available to districts.

If specific forms are expected then they should be mandated If it is stated"in a reasonable time" but we are held to 10 days then mandate 10 days

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One persons opinion on one twoday visit Seems a little subjective dont you think

There should be a less time-consuming way to monitor the special education process. This district spent 505 hours equal to 14 weeks of time on this process. Think of how that time could have been spent helping students.

not sure

Smaller but annual input could keep us on our toes and continually aware and improving.

At this time the process is time consuming but does allow the district to realize it's strength's and weaknesses.

It would more beneficial if the district had feedback on the report in a more timely manner. We mailed in our self-study in April 2002 and have just now received our final compliance report a year and a half later.

Make certain all staff members and administrators associated with the special education program are fully involved.

Reduce by perhaps five million the amount of required paper work.

Better consistency from one consultant to the other at DESE! Feedback could have been given in less time than 16 months.

We would have appreciated more feedback more quickly after the submission of our information.

More time to complete process or split-up process.

Training workshops every other year on the Program Review Standards and Indicators.

More time to have DESE people do on-site training.

1300 items takes a tremendous amount or work. Maybe the SEMSA could be a focus review. We are most concerned about the amount of time it takes for the SEMSA and then the district may also get drawn for an on-site review.

1300 items takes a tremendous amount or work.

Remain the same for each district for the MSIP cycle period. It takes 4 years for all of my districts to complete a cycle.

I felt the self-study was cumbersome and time consuming. Streamlining that would be nice. It would also be nice to know how districts were picked for the on-site review.

It would be beneficial to have an easier access to the trainers in order to answer questions as you are going through the process.

Much of the SEMSA review was number gathering and not a learning experience. The SEMSA evaluation and subsequent report seemed to focus on specific words/phrases that the evaluator wanted to see and not on the appropriateness of the process.

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It there is a self-assessment then there should not have to be an on-site review. Our school is a member of the Bolivar Exceptional Pupil Cooperative. We attend regularly scheduled meetings to become informed of the needed changes.

Staff felt there was a need to use clearer special education terminology. Instructions could be made clearer and more user friendly.

It takes to much time.

Give districts more time to complete the self-assessment. Send final reports faster. Give clear directions on how to complete corrective actions on the final report.

Smaller amounts of data to be examined.

I would eliminate it. If you are still going to do an on-site it is a waste of time. It is just doing the samething twice.

Training was not consistent with what was required

Districts could receive checklist forms and criteria each year to make sure they are staying in compliance in the years they are not going through SEMSA.

Make the directions easier to understand. Give examples of how to complete specific forms. Especially for those districts with new special education teachers and directors.

Once the final report is received a phone contact would be helpful in taking corrective action where needed.

Perhaps it would be more beneficial to have trainings for all teachers and personnel involved on a yearly basis to keep abreast of the process and how to keep up to date and aware of all the changes.

Lessen the amount of work. The time involved in this process way way too demanding for 170 files.

No suggestions since I did not go through the process.

I felt I had files well organized prior to the on-site review. If I had know the procedures and the items to be review I could have marked these and the flow would have been faster.

Involve more staff in the on-site visit so they may gain more knowledge.

provide adequate training and notice of on-site visit - what to expect - give more than 2 weeks to prepare

Due to so many new special education teachers that have not had special education training they need to be allowed to go through the training on the parts of the process they go through.

Allow for a 1year and 1/2 process. Train one academic school year (2003-04) and then the data could be due the following May 2005.

None. We are satisfied with the current process.

More responsibility and accountability on the shoulders of regular. Regular ed needs to recognize that special ed is a service. That special needs students are their students first and foremost.

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Certain notations were not read/reviewed regarding some questions & responses (i.e. Yes / No were the only options when N/A was more appropriate). Notations explaining NO responses were not read or items would not have been marked out of compliance.

When hours to complete the process were reported they did not reflect man hours which would be tremendous!

Not Sure.

I really liked the SEMSA workshop it should be offered more frequently.

Combine it with MSIP or use it in lieu of MSIP for special education. Double work with no compensatory time or relief of regular duties

Inconsistency between determinations made by different review teams was a problem district to district. That is unfair and not good. It diminishes the validity and reliability of the review. It spreads a lack of confidence in the Department.

fewer files

I can think of ways to improve the process by implementing a process at the local level but would be difficult and unnecessary at the DESE level.

Narrow the scope of the review; it includes too many areas to address. It takes too long and that distracts from the effective instruction and time management.

As long as districts have a knowledgeable director who can lead the process little else needs to be done. Directors who are just getting started would be hard pressed to come up with the right data to submit

I would like to participate in the training on a yearly basis. This would be best to keep my district prepared for success.

Compliance standards should be provided to districts one year in advance of monitoring.

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Survey Questions/Comments

Question 30: In what ways might the SEMSA process be improved in the area of assessing student performance?

This wasn't a concern on our review.

Check if student is progressing on IEP goals and objective. That is the real evaluative tool.

It does not take into account individual accomplishments and improvements no matter how small. MAP and AYP are so flawed when it comes to really understanding progress of students with disabilities

The State and District Special Education Profiles should be available sooner and more emphasis should be placed on this aspect of the review. This was not stressed in the training or the actual information submitted to DESE.

Including a component that looks specifically at annual state assessments and utilizing that information to drive instructional goals and objectives.

Districts should be able to chart progress of students toward their IEP goals (like what percent of students met 100% of their goals).

I do not believe the special ed students should be tested on their grade level (since they obviously aren't on grade level)

The whole process of assessing our students performance based on MAP testing is ridiculous and needs to be changed. I don't see how you can change the MSIP process of assessing the performance until they change those requirements.

Develop an assessment that will accurately assess the abilities of student who are NOT working at grade level.

Do better training on what it all means. Most special education people don't really understand the concept. They only worry about evaluations and iep's.

I felt it solely looked at compliance. Provide more guidance and requirements for looking at student performance. We could already look at the District Profile to see where student performance was- we didn't need to complete SEMSA to look at that.

I believe that the current standards for special education students participating in the MAP is flawed and should be revisited. The frustration levels some of the lower cognitive functioning students are subjected to appears to be to be not only cruel but

Not sure at this point We did not do this in the first cycle

Well it is unrealistic to believe that students will continue to improve assessment results if we are to limit the assistance we give them. If they could be successful they wouldn't be special ed

There was no real assessment of student performance in the self-monitoring activity. All of the data regarding student performance was gathered electronically through results of MAP testing.

to look at special education performance as a group in itself and not base the whole district performance on special education performance. special ed students should grow with steady improvements but not in comparison to regular education growth

Compliance and student performance are seldom coexistent. Strict compliance often interferes with progress by taking time and effort away from services. However a longitudinal review of the iep for several students may enhance goal setting.

Continual training in all areas for teachers. This is in need due to the teachers receiving the praxis. Also the 1st and 2nd year teachers and the veteran teachers need constant training due to the constant changes.

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Because of the low numbers of students on the data it is hard to determine whether the district's information obtained is significant or not. For district's with low numbers I'm not sure how we would best assess IEP student performance.

No suggestions.

We didn't think MAP scores were the best ways to assess student performance for special services children. We need a way to compare each child with individual improvement.

MAP is not a good indicator of student performance for ANY student. There are a LOT of special students that will never be successful on the MAP but do not meet the criteria for MAP-A. Perhaps other test data would be helpful.

I'm not sure.

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No Child Left Behind has taken the individual out of IDEA. NCLB will be the determining factor on assessing student performance.

The students with disabilities are being assessed in an unjust manner when asked to meet AYP. Student performance should be an individual success to match the IEP.

Since we have some guidelines now that should be improved. If you have not posted the District Profile Review Guide on the SELS messages that would be helpful to other districts.

Since we have some guidelines now that should be improved.

Develop a test which is a fair test for all students. Student's with special needs should not be tested utilizing a test which is in many cases several grade levels above their reading level.

This process does not affect student performance. Compliance details do not correlate to student performance.

It would be beneficial if the same people reviewed the information sent to DESE that trained the district. Compliance calls are sometimes based on individual interpretation of the regulations

Make it a learning process with dialogue between supervisor and district staff rather than a line by line check for specific words/phrases. Get the report back to the district quicker and allow the district to respond and clear up questions.

Look at the progress a student is making toward goals of the IEP and not at MAP scores for evaluating progress. Choose ten files to review and not a random of all our students. We are professionals striving to be in compliance.

N/A

This is the weakest area.

Compare student performance of a group not just from year to year.

Not sure.

I would not continue it. The workshops on AYP have been of far greater value.

We do not have the answer but not with how well they do on the MAP. The test is inappropriate for most of our students

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Our district feels that this monitoring process is more of a measurement of teacher performance not student performance.

The review was to monitor compliance with regulations. The vast majority of these regulations have no effect on student performance. Having a complete file of meeting notices does not improve student achievement.

As student performance and improvement of that performance is our primary outcome-any ideas on assessing that performance is welcome.

I did my own assessment of student performance using Excel and data from the state. My teachers used Clear Access.

Look at performance beyond MAP

Aligning IEP goals and objectives to the grade level expectations.

Filing electronically created problems. I felt I made several errors in reporting. It would have been easier and less confusing to submit hard-copies.

look at performance not the paperwork process in such detail

Not sure.

Refresher courses for reading and interpreting scores of MAP students

Undecided.

More tech support and understanding is needed by both regular and special educators. The culture of mine and yours needs to be erased.

Student performance has many other factors than just MAP scores (i.e. district chosen achievement testing - student's overall cognitive/IQ ability VS student's progress from 1 gr. level to another and grades earned in courses - etc.)

More consideration for district student population and progress on student progress on IEPs. Many of our students will always function at Level 2 and 3 no matter what resources or learning experiences are provided.

Not Sure

More emphasis on individual gains of students. Progress may be relative not readily evident on statistical charts devalues progress. Staff members help achieve gains see relative success but no validation from the statistics seen by the public

Separate spec.ed. students who might be expected to achieve (speech) from those who will never make proficient (MR)

Not sure

How did it assess student performance

Ask about it directly. DESE should be able to get this information from Clear Access.

None

It sounds as though this will be the focus of the next MSIP cycle! I am hoping that MAP and MAP-A scores are not the only part of the focus because we have a great deal to do for improvement!

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Additional Comments/Suggestions

We really learn more when we have someone in person visit our school.

I would just as soon have DESE come out and do their own monitoring onsite. It would save my staff the hassle and a lot of extra work. I think the self monitoring has merit it just needs some work.

Note: The not sure responses are because I have not been informed whether or not we have received the results of our Desk Top Review.

The self-monitoring process should be waived during times between reauthorization of IDEA and final release of OSEP regulations and the revised State Plan. Districts need time to know what changes are made in order to implement them.

There seems to be differences in compliance calls from one DESE consultant to another. My consultant seems to be judging quality beyond the standard. Constructive criticism is good. Judging wording is going beyond the standard.

We also had trouble submitting the reports and had to re-submit to a different E-mail. The on-site at Humansville was very negative. We were not given feedback until the exit conference and were never given feedback on performance scores!

On-site review was very positive. Good feedback was given throughout the monitoring process. We also reviewed the performance data.

The review reports should come back to the district within 60 days of submission. This would allow more impact of the findings. A year later is simply too long.

I found the process frustrating rather than educational. The final report was almost a year late in coming back. Directions on the narrative were not clear. Being found out of compliance because specific words/phrases were not used was questionable.

Provide written guidelines for residential treatment facilities. Begin looking at the goals and objectives of the IEP and the progress being made with less emphasis on paperwork detail.

None

I am concerned about decisions being made about student achievement and school effectiveness based on MAP scores when the number taking the MAP test may not be statistically significant in districts with small student populations.

The compliance supervisor assigned to this district was most helpful.

We have never received any letters or feedback on our self-evaluation other than to be told we would have an on-site. Even when I asked I could not find out anything. I asked the compliance supervisor who is going to do our on-site and she never got back

We couldn't have made it without the help of Charolette Spencer. She is great and very helpful.

It was very beneficial but the process took an unreasonable amount of time.

Looking at effective teaching practices instead of paperwork will raise student achievement. The majority of teachers and districts are trying to do the best they can for students. A complete file doesn't guarantee a complete education.

I felt the self-monitoring review process was an excellent method of looking at how and why we are doing what we are doing. Self-examination is a necessary activity leading to improvement.

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Additional Comments/Suggestions

The time spent by my office personnel could have been better employed helping my teachers with their duties.

The teacher turnover in this district is high. There is a constant training plan in motion. Are there copies of PERFECT IEP'S and EVALUATION REPORTS to use as models? Give us PERFECT and we'll comply.

Dissatisfied-insufficient notice-received 2 weeks notice to prepare files-Extremely picky on details non-related to performance of students-strictly concerned about paperwork-looked at files 10 years back-supervisor lacked knowledge of sped

I feel that the overall process was helpful in that it helped to emphasize the steps needed in the special education process. We encourage the special education teachers to keep document B handy to go over as they go through the process.

Sometimes review 10 files (different) students was difficult for each area. This was the most time consuming part.

I was not the Administrator when we went through MSIP. Please send me a copy of our SEMSA. Polo RVII 300 W School St Polo MO 64671

None.

We submitted our information in paper format the first year before it was done on disk so we are unaware of that specific part of the process. Our responses may reflect that.

Instead of comparing apples & oranges (each yrs gr. 3 etc. is not the same group of students) to show progress - real student progress would best be shown by looking at each individual student's progress along a continuum of growth & development.

It is unreasonable to require districts to be in compliance or have to complete a MSIP review when OSEP and DESE have not completed the revisions to regulations and state plan.

None

The DESE staff was more than helpful. Any time we had questions they guided us through any problem areas.

I am not done yet as I have not gotten the information indicating what I need to send in to document changes and compliance or corrective action.

Vickie Meyers was very helpful. We learned much about compliance from her. Overall the on-site review is very effective. All schools should have them on a regular basis.

Based on transfer info it appears that some districts are abusing the no testing required for reevaluation procedure.

Perhaps those who are on the MSIP cycle for the year could collaborate more frequently throughout the year to ensure success and learning during the process. We learn so much from each other! I cannot accurately guess how many hours we spent during the

Not sure" was selected in lieu of "not applicable for C.8. Electronic submission was not available for 2001-02.